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Hyphenated American

BY EDWARD A. STEINER

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The Confession *of a* Hyphenated American

By
EDWARD A. STEINER
Author of "From Alien to Citizen," etc.



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The Confession of a Hyphenated American

D R. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, who was as much metaphysician as physician, declared that every man has a blind spot. If he were living in these war-clouded days he would say—if he were capable of reasoning at a time when the whole world has gone mad—that every man has a seeing spot, and that all the rest of him is blind. He might declare a large portion of humanity stone-blind; for even the wisest and the fairest among us are in that happy frame of mind in which we believe that we alone have retained vision, now that the world has gone back to the "*Tohu Vawohu*" which reigned before the Creator said: "Let there be light."

Living as we are, at a time when we have lost faith in one another's intellectual

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integrity, it is as difficult to speak clearly and dispassionately as it is to listen patiently. Both processes become doubly difficult, if the speaker belongs to that class of citizens upon whom a famous phrase-maker has bestowed the now malodorous title, "Hyphenated Americans."

The word "hyphenated" has led a very honourable and innocent existence in the ample bosom of Webster's dictionary ever since that volume became the longer catechism of a large portion of the English-speaking world ; and, according to that authority, it means "something which is united by hyphens." The hyphen itself, which boasts of Greek lineage, means, in that classic language, "under one, into one, or together." Even where it is used to separate two words it indicates that they belong together, although they have a distinct origin. Evidently the aforementioned phrase-maker permitted his mood to influence his definition of the hyphen, with the result that the short, very innocent and proper dash has by

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brooding over it become an elongated, damnable damn. So that which had the same significance as the ring at a wedding ceremony has suddenly become the symbol of divorce, and is being given the same place in the sphere of patriotism that adultery has in married life.

CONFESSING THE HYPHEN

I am in the enviable position, denied most of my kind, in which, before my peers, I can present my cause ; and I plead guilty to the charge of being a hyphenated American according to Webster—not according to Roosevelt. I am proud of the fact and happy in it, just as proud and happy as I am in being a married man, rather than a divorced man. That I was born in another country, subject of a monarch, I was, for certain well-established reasons, unable to avoid. To my credit be it stated that as soon as I discovered my deplorable condition I sought to make amends in the only way I knew : the way taken by millions before and after me—emigrating to a coun-

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try which was generous enough to admit us all.

Not only did that country admit us to her shores, she did not bar our way into her "Holy of Holies." Thus we were bound to her so closely that we became "hyphenated" before we knew it, wedded to her "for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer"; married to her as swiftly as marriages take place in this country, where everything is frightfully accelerated.

We were bound to her with a sense of loyalty and devotion which the native-born American cannot always feel. What she has done for us is sufficient to bind us to her "till death us do part," no matter what she may have done or not have done in these unhappy days, in which every one of us has spoken harshly, judged partially and condemned hastily. The time will come and that very soon, when all of us, remembering the wild words we have let loose, the ill we have approved and the good we have condemned, will smite our breasts, saying: "*Mea culpa.*"

OF A HYPHENATED AMERICAN

Again speaking for myself, I had quite forgotten that I possessed even the innocent hyphen, as interpreted by Webster, not by Roosevelt. There was not a drop of American blood in my veins when I landed in New York scarcely thirty years ago. Yet I can say to-day without a bit of cant, which I always detest, and which is doubly detestable in these trying days, that if you drained every drop of my blood—and I am willing to give the last drop, if needed, if thus my words might be proved—you would find in my veins American blood only.

I regarded myself so thoroughly an American that I forgot the very names of the ships on which I chronically migrated and remembered only one of them, which it seemed had brought me here—the *Mayflower*. Whenever I returned to the land of my birth it was like going to a foreign country. When I stood before the Emperor's palace in the city of Vienna, with no great patriotic emotions stirring in my breast, I could

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hear the questioning voice of the poet
ringing accusingly in my ears :

“ Lives there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said,
‘ This is my own, my native land ’ ? ”

and I had to admit that I was the miserable wretch whose existence he doubted.

When my face was turned Westward, and the odours of the steerage filled my nostrils, then indeed I knew that I was going home, and the Alpine horn from the mountains, snow-crowned and glorious, had no such welcoming sound as the fog-horn from the low dunes at Sandy Hook.

OTHERS OF MY KIND

How often I have stood among thousands of my kind, on the great ships, those wombs out of which millions of us were born, full-grown, into this new land. Men and women were there, going back to their native land from which they thought themselves as yet unweaned.

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Many of them, more successful than I, were returning with small fortunes which they intended to spend in the towns and villages where they were born and where they expected to die. They soon discovered, however, that they were pilgrims and sojourners in the land of their birth and again they were seeking another country, "even an Heavenly"; or, to use the language of the street, they wanted to get back to "God's Country."

I have been a chronic immigrant, following so frequently the trail worn by millions of weary feet across this continent that it has become a sort of "White Way" for me, straighter than that on Broadway, and not so dangerous. I have visited every foreign colony between Angel Gate on the Pacific and Hell Gate on the Atlantic; and while I have found the mother tongue surviving in mutilated form among the older generation, and discovered that the most loyal part of our anatomy, the stomach, still craves the "leeks and garlics" of the Homeland, I have also found the

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Spirit of America brooding over these aliens, wooing them and winning them, while but very few do not finally yield it full allegiance.

I have guided many distinguished foreign guests who came here to study the strange ways of this country which they had called "the Dollar Land." If they were discerning, and some of them were, they discovered that this country is held together by a finer metal than gold and by a nobler symbol than the eagle of our coinage.

They found that although there have come here in the last twenty years some thirteen millions of aliens, broken bits, torn patches of all nationalities and races, we are being knitted to one another as a nation. At no time in our history has the sense of nationality been stronger, and never before were we more truly the United States of America than now.

These students of our national life were amazed and confounded as they observed the change in the expression, bearing and deportment of the peoples whom they

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knew in the Old World as sullen, rebellious, suspicious and incapable of cohesion. The Slovaks among our immigrants I have studied most intimately, both in their native country and in those hard and dangerous occupations which have fallen to their lot here, in the mining camps and steel mills. Although among the latest comers, and, on account of their political history, the most unripe people for Americanization, they passed the following resolution at a recent convention :

“ Enjoying the blessings of political and civil liberty, under the beneficent provisions of the United States constitution, which blessings were freely bestowed upon us by the generosity of the American people who, by admitting us to their land, opened wide to us the doors of opportunity and allowed us to share with them the fruits of the labours of their forefathers, dearly bought with their fortunes and their lives, so that we can pursue happiness, the great, inalienable right of every man, better in this land of our adoption than in the land of our birth ;

“ We, the citizens and residents of the United States of Slovak birth, can the more keenly feel the plight of our brethren across the seas and hear

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the agonizing cries of those millions of our kin who are still groaning under the oppression of in-human laws and the tyranny of a selfish, privileged class, and—

“ Well knowing that the American heart always beats in sympathy with the oppressed nations of the earth and always has been willing to lend to such oppressed peoples its moral and even material support,

“ The Slovak League of America, a federation of the Slovak organizations and newspapers of this country, dedicates this Memorandum to the *American People.*”

Not long ago I spoke at the Ford Hall Forum in Boston, where democracy can be seen in the making under the guidance of that superb American, George W. Coleman. It is the most heterogeneous audience I ever address, the majority being Russian Jews, temperamentally the most difficult material I know for this experiment. I have seen them at the great Zionist Congress at Basle and they were like a seething, boiling mass, unmanageable and dangerous. Theodore Herzl, that kingly Jew, a master of assemblies, was incapable of controlling

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them. I have heard him say: "They are impossible, they will kill me!"

If his spirit could have hovered over that audience in Ford Hall he would have said that a miracle had been wrought among his people; for at Ford Hall they not only yield themselves to the speaker's fervent speech, but in the discussion following they show that their fiery individualism has been subdued if not conquered. They are making themselves ready to play their part in an orderly democracy.

It is, of course, well known that before the war those institutions among the older groups which depended upon the maintenance of the mother tongue, languished and were ready to die. The newspaper, the church, the theater, if supported at all, relied entirely upon the newcomers, even the first generation, after a time, being weaned from them. This swift process was ruthless, destroying much that was best in the immigrant's inheritance, and frequently not putting anything of value in its place. It separated families, destroyed parental authority,

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crushed out the fine flavours of tradition, and left the raw, human material a prey to the low, the coarse and the vulgar. We who had the shaping of it in our hands saved our skirts from the contaminating touch, talking much about the immigrant problem but doing little to solve it in the one way in which it could be solved.

Wherever the idealistic American man or woman heard the call to service,—and, thank God, many of them heard it—there they wrought some such miracle as I have seen performed in Ford Hall Forum.

Go among the settlements generously scattered through your great cities, and you will find a hunger for ideals, a thirst for the best things, and a passion for brotherly relationship, hard to satisfy even by that noble army of men and women who have become the High Priests of our national spirit, ministering in the name of our common country.

I said that I had forgotten I had a hyphen, and it is true. If I thought of it at all, it appeared to me like the lobes

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and glands and other now useless impedimenta which I, in common with other human beings, have inherited from my ancestors of varied species, who knew how to use them. That these useless parts may become inflamed and dangerous, those of us know who have had the case diagnosed by a physician who knew not only what ailed us, but also knew the size of our bank account. The difficulty is not with the hyphen, but with the inflamed hyphen; and because it has become a somewhat contagious disease manifesting itself in different ways, I shall, after enumerating them, discuss the various remedies proposed, and offer a cure which I believe would be effective.

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN HYPHEN

One hyphen is the Atlantic Ocean hyphen; and that I discovered in the first cabin, not in the steerage. Sometimes I do travel in the cabin, my objection to it being not constitutional, but financial.

On one of those rare occasions I had

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the good fortune to have as a fellow passenger a real, live countess. Naturally she would not speak to me, because she had ancestors and I had none. Once she did graciously bridge the gulf between us, and that under the stress of a great storm. She asked me whether I thought the storm was going to be serious or not; common danger makes for at least temporary democracy. When she was assured that there was no danger, she relapsed into dignified and proper aristocratic silence. She had one child and a number of pedigreed dogs, all of them kept from the contaminating touch of mere Americans. I knew her father by sight and by reputation ; he was a very celebrated man who fought and bled — others on Wall Street, and he had purchased a title as well as various and sundry ancestors for his daughter. This was the first case of the inflamed hyphen which I discovered ; and I can assure you it was a hopeless one.

It was in that cabin and not in the steerage that I had to fight real battles

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for the United States, for its democracy and inherent high ideals. The real, hyphenated Americans whose hyphen signified dual loyalty, badly diluted at that, I found in Charlottenburgh, Dresden and Munich, in Paris and the Riviera, among those Americans who had expatriated themselves for cultural or financial reasons. Their patriotism showed itself in eating turkey on Thanksgiving Day, or habitually using a certain brand of soap which is supposed to be ninety-nine per cent. pure, still leaving one per cent. for patriotism.

I found widows of American soldiers drawing pensions and repudiating our democracy while they spent their money in the gracious, if faint, shadow of royalty; and near-widows whose incomes were derived from the toil of American workmen, yet who believed so thoroughly in preparedness that they never were without military escort.

I have seen the children of our merchant princes in English and Swiss schools passing through educational

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processes which were designed to sweat out of them their American blood ; while in their father's shops and mills, foreign-born men and women were sweated, to get the dollars with which to pay for those sons' foreign education.

I have seen rivers of gold poured into the pockets of the Prince of Monaco ; stacks of gold, good, plain, pure United States coin, offered upon the green altar of his highness by men and women who thought it disloyal for our immigrants to send their honest savings, mere crumbs from rich men's tables, to the same old, poverty-stricken world.

One of the many effects of the European war upon our country is that these "Hyphenated Americans" have had to return to the United States and that many of them had to come, even as their grandfathers came, in the steerage. Then, I hope, they realized what it meant to have a country ; a country which, although imperfect in many things, is one in which the individual may help it strive for perfection, and consciously strive for it.

OF A HYPHENATED AMERICAN

I wish I might have met in that steerage of our peerage, those whom I met but a few years prior to that in the cabin of the steamer *Cincinnati*. That business man, who told me that he came to Broadway from the middle West, with five dollars in his pocket, a Bible his mother gave him, and not much else. He had toured through Germany, France and England in his own car, and was bitter about our imperfections, our corrupt politics which he had never helped to make clean ; he gloried in the perfection and completeness of that Europe through which he had glided in his eight cylinder machine. I should like to have seen him in the steerage and heard him tell how he and his wife had to make their way through that perfect Europe when the war broke out. It would have been worth a great deal to have seen them walk across the Dutch border and make a run for the crowded ship to take them back to the country for which he had only one use—as a place in which to make money.

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I have always regretted that I was not in Europe when the war broke out, just because I would have had a chance to come back in the steerage when it was crowded by Americans. If I had been in that steerage I would have rejoiced to see them glad for once, as supremely glad as any emigrants, when they passed under the shadow of the Goddess of Liberty.

The real treason against the democratic ideals of America has been committed not on the East Side of New York but on the West Side. I find more real patriotism on Fifth Street than I find on Fifth Avenue; and if "government by the people, of the people, and for the people" perishes from the earth it will perish from the exclusive suburb, down, and not from the inclusive Ghetto, up.

We who, by the grace of God, have been delivered from the tyranny of monarchies are not among those who return to the Old World to exchange our fortunes for baronetcies; we do not covet the condescending smiles of the nobility;

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nor are we among those who prate about the failure of democracy. We are profoundly grateful for this inheritance of government "of the people," and if we are dissatisfied, it is because that government is not sufficiently "by the people" or "for the people."

The most hopeful material for the realization of our democratic ideals is the immigrant, and not the American emigrant; and the biggest hyphen I know is the Atlantic Ocean, which so many wealthy, native Americans have put between themselves and their United States, to which they have now returned, not from inclination but from necessity.

THE IMPOUNDED HYPHEN

Besides this Atlantic Ocean hyphen of which we have been temporarily cured by the war, we have to face the stern fact that there is among the newer immigrants a large group which Prof. Edward A. Ross appropriately calls the "imprisoned immigrants."

Certain organizations have naturally

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resisted the process of Americanization. This is especially true of the churches in which nationality and religion are either identical, or so related to one another because of common historic experiences, as to make them indistinguishable to their adherents. The Greek Orthodox Churches, which are always nationalistic, have most to fear, but are the least capable of resisting the forces at work.

The Roman Catholic Churches have been able to impound successfully one or two Slavic groups, but effectively only in agricultural colonies. Even there certain tendencies among them have resisted complete subjugation. Among the Poles there is considerable schism which, from the religious standpoint, has little to commend it; but is an indication of the fact that there are forces working towards liberation if not towards Americanization.

It is rather interesting and disquieting to find that the most persistent impounded hyphen is found among certain Protestant Churches. They are supported by their governments which maintain close super-

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vision over them. Because of the historic relation of these churches to similar American bodies, this supervision has proved rather ineffective, and wherever such fellowship has been established, the process of Americanization could not be resisted.

It would be easy to grow too optimistic as to the future of the impounded immigrants by believing that, through the infiltration of American ideals, these groups would be set free to develop in harmony with their new environment. One or two generations are bound to grow up poorly acquainted with the language, the ideals, and the principles of the country destined to be their home and that of their children —with the result that they and this country alike will be the sufferers.

It is also easy to foresee that if Europe should continue to be in a state of national ferment, and there is nothing to indicate that it will not, the reaction will be felt by these impounded groups, and the churches which guard their souls will, with equal zeal, guard their hyphens.

We have as yet no effective remedy

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against this impounded hyphen, because by the establishment of parochial schools access to the child has been denied us. Some way will have to be found, however, a way which on one side will guard the religious sensibilities of our fellow citizens and on the other side open a way for the child to enter into its new national inheritance.

THE POLITICAL HYPHEN

In addition to the impounded hyphen, for which we seem to have no effective cure, our country is visited periodically by the political hyphen ; an inflammatory epidemic of the hyphen at election time.

The seat of the contagion has always been in the bosom of one or the other of our political parties, and is spread largely by office-seekers. Having mixed liberal quantities of illy prepared tables of statistics, and the names of national heroes which they cannot pronounce correctly, with racial and national virtues, the whole is fed to groups of ignorant foreigners who are taught the one privilege of de-

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mocracy,—to vote—and to vote as often as possible.

May I ask in all fairness—and I do wish to be fair—who is responsible for these Hebrew-Republican, these Lithuanian-Democratic and other hyphenated clubs which were and are so frequently used and misused for personal and party ends?

May I also ask of the men who have been loud in their condemnation of the hyphen, and to whom we owe the ill odour attached to it, whether they are entirely guiltless?

May I ask who it was who went to our Little Hungary and ate "*gulyas*" to the glory of—the United States? And who partook of *frankfurters*, frequently imported, sometimes domesticated, and always hyphenated, to prove how much they loved the Germans?

I may be doing these people an injustice. Perhaps they ate "*gulyas*" and *frankfurters* just because they were hungry; perhaps they went to Little Hungary to see the sights; perhaps they appointed certain Little Hungarians and

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Little Italians to office because they, above all others, were fitted for it.

Certain it is that one cannot overestimate the wrong done to our national ideals by those Americans who have thus emphasized the hyphen and gloried in it ; who have rewarded it by petty offices and have stimulated its growth. They have appealed only to the most ignorant and the most degraded of the immigrants and have thus done damage to our democracy in its most vulnerable point.

My own introduction into this sphere of the political hyphen may be illuminating—if any illumination upon this subject is needed.

During one of my journeys "On the Trail of the Immigrant" I attached myself to a group of Poles, who were in that confused mental stage of the recently arrived immigrant which we designate as "green."

We had returned to our boarding-house which, like most of its class in that industrial state, furnished more beer than board. While we were sitting about,

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after our frugal supper, a group of American men entered, so well groomed and prosperous-looking as to arouse our respect if not our envy. The most distinguished among them was introduced to the barkeeper, who brought him to our group. The distinguished American shook hands all around, telling us that he was a particular friend of the Poles, and that as a token of that friendship he had asked the saloon-keeper to fill us up.

Evidently he knew nothing about the Poles, nor how much it takes to fill them up ; for they drank till daybreak, when they fell into a drunken stupor from which they were aroused to be marched to the ballot box.

I marched with them to that altar of our civic liberty which I was eager to see. I could smell it before I saw it, and Polish-Americans cast their ballot for the friend of Poland and the enemy of the United States, after they had been but two months in this country.

I have told this story in a number of towns in that state, and each claimed

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that the identical procedure had taken place there. When I finally told it in the very city where I knew that particular treason against the ballot box had occurred, I asked the audience what they did to the man who had thus betrayed them. Instantly the reply came from the floor, "We sent him to the United States Senate." That Senator is dead. "Peace to his ashes" and more ashes to his peace.

There are but few well-known politicians who have not been guilty of catering to the hyphen in a more or less damaging way; and the most guilty among them are those who have taken up the slogan and cry: "Hyphenated American!" with the same expressions of fear as if they were shouting: "Mad dog!"

There are members of Congress, candidates for our highest offices, mayors of our large cities, and politicians great and small, who drag forth the hyphenated American for his country's condemnation in the same spirit with which the

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Pharisees dragged a woman taken in adultery, before Jesus of Nazareth. I ask them in the light of their own guilty consciences, who will be the first man to cast a stone?

Now that the hyphen is in such bad repute I trust that it will be entirely severed from party names and political slogans; for if there is one place where we have no use for the hyphen, and never had any, it is at the ballot box. If the war has cured us of the Atlantic hyphen, and if it cures us of the political hyphen, then "*God be thankit*" that some good has come out of this mass of ill.

THE SYMPATHETIC HYPHEN

Unfortunately, the war is the direct cause of the fourth kind of hyphen, and that I call the sympathetic hyphen.

It is the nature of war to arouse sympathy with one's own people and antipathy to their foes; and both these feelings have been stimulated in an unusual degree by the present conflict, unprecedented in extent and intensity.

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When the damage done by this war shall finally be estimated, the greatest loss will be found, not in the national treasure wasted, nor in the burden of taxes to be carried by unborn generations, predestined to live even nearer the hunger line than the generation they succeed; not in the ruin of priceless works of art, those precious bequests to all humanity; not even in the loss of human life, which cannot be counted by mere figures. The overwhelming loss will be that of the ideal of internationalism, whose realization seemed so near that we believed we needed but to stretch out our hands to touch it and make it real.

Those of us who believed in it believe in it still; but we realize that those forces which worked for it worked just as much against it; that commerce, science, invention, and all other factors which we so joyously hailed and so confidently acclaimed as progress, hindered as much as helped.

When we begin the slow task of recovering what has been lost, we may

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have to begin with the eighteenth century, rather than with the nineteenth and early twentieth, the age of great disillusionment. It may not be too much to say that humanity has lost at least a century in its march upward from the brute, and that it may take another century to dig away this avalanche of hate.

That we should suffer in the great European disaster we might have known; but that we should believe our national unity to be threatened, that in this broadcast sowing of hate so much of it should fall upon our shores, take root and grow as swiftly as the palm tree of the Hindu fakir, none of us foresaw. It was perfectly natural, however, that those who cherished the ideals and memories of the Homeland should, under this calumny of hate, defend it both unwisely and irrationally; for at a time like this when "wisdom is more precious than rubies," the fact that man is a rational being is open to doubt.

Who are we to complain? We, in whom the English and French hyphens

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are supposed to have been atrophied long ago, until suddenly they swelled to dangerous proportions?

Every man who has taken a decisive stand in this war justifies it by the blood of his ancestors, and every diluted drop of blood inherited from some fighting progenitor has multiplied suddenly and infected the whole body, till most of us feel ourselves to be fighting Scotch Highlanders or Anglo-Saxons, or worse, savage cavemen, rather than the twentieth century Americans we ought to be.

Moreover, this kind of hyphen we have always had with us. To be an Irish-American has been equal to a patent of nobility, and great was the reward of those who marched on St. Patrick's Day under the green flag, which on that occasion was more in evidence than the stars and stripes.

Have not the Irish kept alive in us the hate of England? Have they not influenced, if not controlled, Congress in its relations to the mother country? Have the Irish not plotted and planned with

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our knowledge and our money towards the freeing of Ireland from the yoke of the oppressor? Have they not broken our laws to help their land?

What would happen in New York to-day if England and Ireland were at war, and the United States were to favour England and ship munitions of war to shoot down the Irish? Do you know what would happen? There is no doubt about it. You know and I know.

There would be war, fierce war, upon our streets; for while the Irish are no militarists like the Germans, they are riotous fighters, which the Germans are not; and every Irishman, were he red-headed or not, would fight for Erin. I am neither indicting the Irish nor apologizing for the Germans; I am merely giving you good cause to be grateful that the Germans are usually not red-headed and never Irish.

The sporadic lawlessness of some Germans, their interference with our national neutrality, greatly exaggerated by a prejudiced press, are trifling, in comparison

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with the lawlessness of the Irish, bent upon gaining their national or local political ends.

If you remember that there are about eleven million Germans and so-called German-Americans in this country, that there has been no riot or bloodshed, that the violent language used was used by the few and that the actual lawbreaking was done by fewer still, you may be convinced that the Germans were, and are, and will prove to be, loyal American citizens. They may not agree with our national policy; but in that they often have strong support from many influential Americans. If they have spoken ill of President Wilson to the point of disrespect, and have heaped undeserved calumny upon him, they have merely followed the example set them by the press in general, and by certain influential Americans in particular.

Moreover this is the first time our German American citizens have had a really worthy cause for collective endeavour. Too many of them have resolved and

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fought and voted for the high purpose of retaining their beer mugs, and gloried in the liberty of the stomach. It was not loyalty to the *Kaiser* but to the *Kaiserhof* in which they gloried; and it was often the Bismarck bar around which they rallied, rather than the Bismarck ideals.

If the Germans in America desire to perpetuate German culture, they must discipline themselves by yielding unquestioning obedience to law, and prove that they are capable of governing themselves and others efficiently. If they bring into our city and national governments their practical idealism and thoroughness, we certainly ought not to complain; for we are not so rich in these qualities that there is danger of a surplus.

If, however, the Germans try to establish a Little Germany in the United States, and separate themselves and their children from our common language and national interests, they will suffer by it as much as we; for we cannot be a nation, a great United States, if we are divided among ourselves. So much every intelli-

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gent man ought to know, for the strength of the German Empire lies in its unity, and that unity was achieved by conformity to the Prussian ideal. Where conformity was not yielded voluntarily it was imposed by force, and where that force was opposed, the opposition was treated as one of the worst crimes against the state.

In this respect the United States has been remarkably lenient, and, to my mind, wisely so; for people are rarely assimilated by force. That method is cruel, uncertain, and too costly. If it had been used in this country, we would have achieved much less than we have, and Congress might have been divided upon national or linguistic lines, which in the end would have been disastrous to the unity that is one of the chief characteristics of this nation.

I am somewhat more fortunate than many of my hyphenated and unhyphenated fellow citizens, in not having allowed myself to be swept along by the prevailing mob spirit which has divided the

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country into two hostile camps. I have remained sane because I had no faith in diplomatic papers, whether they were called white, or pink or blue. I know that by their very nature they are all more or less black. I have remembered the characterization of a diplomat by the German writer and satirist, Börne, who said: "*Ein Diplomat muss drei Sprachen sprechen: Französisch sprechen, nichts sprechen und Lügen sprechen.*" Of the three languages which he says a diplomat must speak, "*lügen*" is the most in evidence in these papers.

HYPHENATED PATRIOTISM

My sympathies from the first were pro-American; not only because I love America above every country in the world, but because it seems to me that to be pro-American is the nearest which humanity has as yet come to being pro-human.

I have nothing but loathing for this "foul and unthinkable war," for I have lived where it was bred, and I have

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watched the dastardly and damnable process. A generation of men was begotten and trained, to be fodder for cannon and to walk joyously into that hell. There was aroused in them the very noblest emotion of which the human heart is capable, and then it was poisoned by hate, to be used for the base purpose of human slaughter.

I refuse to be patriotic in the European sense—which means to believe everything bad about other nations and nothing but good about your own, and to hate with desperate hatred the people living yonder, where they have painted another colour on the custom house barrier.

If to be an American, a real American, and a patriot, is merely that same thing, then frankly I am neither an American nor a patriot; for in America I have been emancipated from the patriotism of hate. I have found that here men work together harmoniously for the common good and the glory of a great country, though their historic roots lie buried in

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different lands and colonies, among people with different religious and social ideals, living in states which have conflicting economic interests, speaking diverse languages and expressing their faith in God through different creeds.

Here two nations exist upon the same continent, one of which has its political affiliation across the sea; yet no line of fortresses divides, to create fear, and no battle-ships float menacingly along its inland seas.

All these facts and the faith into which I was born again in this country, a faith which has neither political nor racial boundary, and whose Founder called Himself the Son of Man, have made me an American, which is, or ought to be, something radically different from being a European.

While I have been emancipated from the patriotism of hate, I have had my love of country increased, because I regard it as a country worth living for and even, if need be, worth dying for.

I must confess that it is not easy to

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keep faith in America these days, when it seems at times that we are not a bit better than the country from which I have alienated myself, and from whose monarch I have forsaken allegiance.

The reading of the metropolitan press and the weak echoes of the press of the country have often caused my faith to waver. It has seemed to me that a war-broth was being brewed in editorial sanctums, and poured down the throats of the public; a hellish broth, compounded of greed, political opportunism, and prejudice. The noteworthy exceptions merely serve the well-known purpose. The press has been and is a telescope rather than a mirror, holding up to the public the large or small end as best serves its purpose.

I am not speaking merely of the papers printed in the English language; the German press, with a few exceptions, has been just as bad, just as un-American, and not infrequently treasonable. There is one particular sheet printed in New York City which gives me a feeling akin

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to madness every time I see it, and I tear it to pieces and trample upon it in my wrath.

The reading of war books either in prose or verse does not conduce to change my opinion, and going to church in these latter days has not helped increase my faith in the religion of the Nazarene. In fact, if much of what I have heard from the pulpit is Christianity, then my place is with anarchists and atheists in their curbstone church. If I believed that the press of to-day reflects the American spirit, I should perforce be driven from a country which I love with a lover's passion, but could not then respect.

It is not easy to keep one's poise in these days, when, if one does not condemn Germany in toto, his friends call him pro-German, and if one ventures to criticize and censure Germany, his fellow-countrymen look upon him as a traitor.

If it had not been so obviously ridiculous, it would have been difficult to be civil the other day when I was told by

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my hostess that she was sure there were German spies in Northern Maine all summer. She saw them prowling about in the woods during the day, and they spent their nights writing reports to their government. Doubtless those "spies" were taking a census of the pine stumps, and mapping out the route for a German invasion by way of Northern Maine!

I wonder if you can picture just what happens on the inside of a man who is told in the home of a professor in one of America's foremost universities that an entire German army corps is already in the United States, merely waiting for word from the Fatherland to commit the same butchery which was committed in Belgium. The seemingly intelligent woman who made this remark, and whose statement went unchallenged, looked askance at me, not sure but that underneath my rather tightly fitting afternoon coat I wore a Prussian Uhlan's uniform.

How would you feel if at every turn you were suspected of being one of the

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Kaiser's spies, and were told that Harvard University is full of them? Can you imagine hearing this from a Harvard student, who is sure that one of these spies rooms above him?

The ridicule heaped upon Henry Ford and his Peace Party, the scorn with which the word pacifist is pronounced, as if it were synonymous with traitor, make me think that I have misinterpreted or misunderstood the Spirit of America, and that this country is, after all, only a piece of the Old World separated by the Atlantic Ocean and not by higher ideals.

It is difficult not to yield to the pull of the hyphen just at this time, when we need to give our country an undivided loyalty.

Here, though, is the hyphen, no matter how it came, and who is to blame? The French, English, Irish and German hyphen. We are all harking back and not looking forward; we are all being swayed by the editorial pages rather than by the pages of the New Testament; there is blood on the horizon, and it is in

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our nostrils. Even as dogs, who are trained to guard sheep and to give their lives for them, begin to eat them as soon as they smell their blood, so we feel the passion of primitive man; the mouldy odour of the cave is upon us, and we have fallen back several thousand years.

I am not afraid of war; not afraid that house and home, reared in the joy of love and labour, may be destroyed.

I am not afraid of dying:—I should rather be riddled by bullets than eaten by cancer. I should sooner perish by a submarine than from Bright's disease.

I do fear, frankly fear, killing and destroying. Most of all, I am afraid of demolishing the structure we have reared here; a rare commonwealth made up of the flotsam and jetsam of the world, which has drifted in through the longer and shorter years. We are a nation—a great nation—a united nation, although composed of the most diverse materials.

Men talk of our democracy's being a failure. If it had achieved nothing more than the making of the United States,

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faulty but great, defective but united, democracy would be justified ; for no monarchy has ever succeeded in so difficult and dangerous an experiment.

What shall we do about it ?

The great cry is for preparedness. It has been shouted from the housetops, it fills the public press and the pulpit until the word fairly reeks from its two elements : fear and hate.

I have no objection to preparedness ; but I do object to the attending hysteria, which may accomplish the very opposite of what is desired, and weaken rather than strengthen the nation. Guns and battleships can be bought for money ; but fidelity and devotion cannot be gained by breeding suspicion of those who happen to have been born in another country.

I plead guilty to being one of those "mollycoddles" and "college sissies" held up to the ridicule of the populace. I do not believe in war ; not until every resource to settle the difficulty without it has been exhausted. If, however, war should come and the vital interests of the

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nation be attacked, if this government were in danger of perishing from the earth, I and my son would stand somewhere in the line, just as countless "hyphenated Americans" and their children would, even if we had to face our own brothers, who came to do the brutal bidding of their monarchs.

I am sure of myself under any circumstances. I am not so sure of the millions, if we question their loyalty and suspect their motives because in this desperate struggle their sympathies are with the mother country, rather than with its enemies.

What shall we do then with these millions of "Hyphenated Americans"? What about the hyphen?

THE REMEDIES

Three remedies are proposed. One of them by Colonel Roosevelt, who, if he was rightly quoted (which is open to doubt), said: "To hell with the hyphen."

It is a very drastic remedy which, as the Colonel knows, has been mentioned

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once or twice in connection with the still unsolved problem which he himself represents.

I have always strenuously opposed any such stringent measure, for I had a great deal of respect and admiration for the Colonel. Then, too, I have some regard for the poor, unregenerate souls in torment.

No, the time when anathemas were effective has passed long ago; for men discovered that most evils prospered by cursing them, and that so, much of good was destroyed. Since the phrase was coined, and this particular, strenuous method of doing away with it was proposed, we who were born in one country and born again in another, are beginning to question our innermost experiences.

We are wondering whether we have not thrown away our birthright, and whether we ought not to defend and perpetuate this hyphen. We, who always interpreted it as binding us to America, are beginning to wonder whether it should not bind us to the mother country instead.

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It has aroused this questioning mood, and the man who is congratulating himself upon coining the happy (?) phrase, may find its persistent use in connection with the elongated dash, disastrous.

It may undo all that has been done throughout the generous years in which we voluntarily yielded ourselves to the forces and processes which made us into what we and our children were proud to call ourselves—Americans.

Others have proposed that because the Germans have not become pro-English, which seems to them equivalent to their not having become Americans, we must adopt a national policy which will bring about the desired result.

In the editorial columns of one of our national weeklies there appeared recently a complaint because the University of Wisconsin had sent out circulars announcing, in German, a short course for farmers. The inference was that this was un-American, and that we would be better off if these farmers remained poor farmers, rather than to be made good

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ones through the aid of their mother tongue.

This means a drift towards the very methods employed in Europe ; a sort of "*Sprachen-kampf*" which has made the Poles of Germany more Polish, and the Danes of Schleswig-Holstein more Danish. This method has made of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy a Babel, in which the builders, whose tongues have been confounded, threw bricks at each other rather than keep on building.

In my judgment we have succeeded in keeping America a country of English speech just because we have not insisted upon it. If there had been governmental pressure brought to bear upon the immigrant's use of English we would have fallen heir to the confusion of Babel, and to the never ending language problems of many of the countries of Europe.

Just because we have not objected to religion's being preached in the tongue in which men were born, the second generation demanded to hear it in English.

We have permitted the Poles to build

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a Polish college which will languish, and ultimately pass away, just as the purely German colleges have languished and died. The one thing we need to make the hyphen permanent, or, worse still, make this a country of warring hyphens, is to demand through pressure that nothing but the English language shall be taught and spoken here.

I am not sure that we can, or that we ought, to accelerate Americanization. Thus far it has been a contagion with no artificial stimulus. When we shall say : "Go to, we will Americanize you," there will be organized effort to resist us, and the resistance will grow with our insistence.

We have, I am sure, lost many opportunities to interpret America to the immigrant, especially to the adult. He does not come in contact with any of our national institutions except the saloon and the police court. If he does become a citizen he usually attains to that high and holy privilege through the venal politician.

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The whole process of naturalization, which has received some attention in these later years, needs to be further revised and improved; especially by dignifying it and by making the applicant realize that it is a privilege which he may forfeit if he does not perform its duties conscientiously.

I am not sure that the attempt to accelerate naturalization, by making the process easier, may not end in cheapening it still further. I believe that every man who wishes to become a citizen ought to be willing to take pains and make sacrifices, if necessary, to gain that end.

Citizenship is too valuable a possession to be thrown at people, and it is a mistaken notion to believe that because a man has taken out his naturalization papers he is necessarily a patriot. In fact, we know that the two are not identical, and I can easily imagine myself loving this country and being ready to sacrifice myself for it, even had I not the sometimes doubtful privilege of voting.

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We should apply a test more searching than the mere answering of a few questions which may be learned by rote. No man should be allowed to become a citizen unless his conduct, during five years' residence in this country, has proved that he is already an American in spirit ; that he knows the meaning of liberty and has not abused it ; and that he is capable of coöperating with others in realizing that freedom.

He ought to be able to prove that he has left behind him Europe's racial, religious and national animosities and prejudices. He ought not to become a child of this democracy, and, as often happens, an added care, until he has proved that he knows its meaning and has lived up to it.

These rigid tests might be difficult to apply, but certainly I should be greatly opposed to any cheapening of the process. The exploited immigrant is very poor material for good citizenship, whether that exploitation has been made by the shrewder and earlier comers among his

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own, which is frequently the case, by heartless corporations, or by petty officials who are supposed to protect him.

Our satellite cities, crude, huge, springing up to-day and ready to perish tomorrow, are poor places in which to train men for citizenship. The hovels in which the immigrants live, or are permitted to live, the vulgarity and brutality of the life which surrounds them, are also poor places for the training of future American citizens from whom we expect self-respect, respect for others, and power to control themselves and others.

The greatest enemy of the immigrant is the saloon; and if he could not obtain liquor, it would prove one of the greatest blessings to him and to the community in which he lives.

It is more necessary to prohibit the sale of liquor to certain groups of immigrants than to the Indians: for the most docile and law-abiding among them are turned into fiends by its use. It has been one of the most potent agencies in despoiling and corrupting them.

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A rigid insistence upon economic and social justice, and the assurance that the state looks upon them as something more than animated machines, to be used and abused at the owners' will, would bind these millions in gratitude to the country of which they now know little or nothing, except when they are punished for breaking its laws.

I have strongly urged, but thus far in vain, that every ship which carries emigrants should have on board a United States officer who would use the time of transit to instruct the people coming to us. They should be told of their privileges and their duties, the nature of our government and the part they may ultimately have in it.

I have often acted voluntarily in such a capacity, and have found that by the aid of immigrants who are returning to us, such instruction can be effectively given.

Much of the preliminary work of inspection could thus be done. I know there are difficulties in the way, but they are not insurmountable.

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The immigrant receiving station should not be merely a heartless machine for sifting this human material. The government ought to do something more for these people than put a chalk mark upon their coats, or open the gate of a strange and new country without a word of advice or warning.

Our national holidays might gain new significance for us if in some public manner we would share them with these newcomers for whom festivals have always had great religious and national meaning.

The machinery of electing our public servants might be made elevating rather than degrading to the new sharers of the great privileges of our democracy.

I have the utmost faith in the power of a good example, and firmly believe that we must develop a finer type of native American citizen.

Consider the attitude of the average American towards the government of his city or country, the low tone of our discussion of public issues, the ridicule

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which we heap upon our officials from which even the chief magistrate is not spared; the personal and partisan selfishness so strongly in evidence even in this most critical moment of our national life. Need we then wonder if every hyphenated citizen does not manifest the gracious unselfishness of a George Washington or the sacrificial devotion of an Abraham Lincoln?

At least one American writer shows ignorance regarding the immigrant's character by calling him ungrateful.

Among all his shortcomings this is the least, and among his virtues it is the greatest, as every one knows who has sensed the soul of these grateful people.

There are among them those who bitterly assail our social order, with its glaring injustice to the many. They criticize our laws which protect property to the neglect of person, which is infinitely more sacred. They are merely doing in their crude way what is being done every day in our colleges in a somewhat more refined but more incisive

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way. The difference is that the agitator prints his protest in pamphlets and binds them in red; while the professor writes a volume which he calls a textbook.

No, they are not an ungrateful people. It is true that one of them has said, in public print, that when the war is over the Germans will return to the Fatherland *en masse*, because all they sought here was economic betterment. There may be an exodus of some Germans. In fact every German who has ceased to be a loyal American, who has no confidence in her institutions, who has no faith in her ideals, ought to return, for he would be a menace to those of us who remain and who will find it difficult enough to be trusted at a time when we shall be eager to prove our love and loyalty to our adopted country.

The larger number which will expatriate itself from this country will be certain Americans returning to their *châteaux* in France, their *pensions* and villas in Italy, and their *spas* and *cursaals* in Germany. All these are now deserted, nearly bank-

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rupt, and will be glad when the Americans return.

The problem will not be to keep the immigrants who are here from going back; the real problem will be, how, wisely to regulate the inflow which is bound to come when the war ceases.

We, the "Hyphenated Americans," will stay, because we need this country, because humanity needs it and its institutions, now as never before. We wish to help it become such a country as it ought to be, kept from Europe's plagues, and healed from its diseases. We wish to live and work so that we shall have the right to call it *our* country. We ought to have the same right to it as had those of our kin who followed your rivers, the Mohawk, the Ohio and the Mississippi; drawing their plows through your marshes, defying fever and pestilence, laying the foundations of your national wealth, and shedding their blood upon your battle-fields.

We want this to become our country, through the labour of the men who mine

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your coal, who dig and melt your ore ; and by the sacrifices of those who die in the heart of the mine and are slain at the mouth of the pit.

These brave millions working so courageously are ours and yours ; the pioneers of a new epoch, the creators of a new era. It is for you to say what the coming days are to mean to them, and to you, and to the country which they love in spite of its sins against them.

What will you do with them ? It is for you to say. You may break them over the wheels of what you proudly call progress. You may starve them into the submissive serfdom out of which they have escaped. You may make them ashamed of their heritage, lodged in brain and heart, or you may make cowards of them and compel them to bow before your flag, as a symbol of authority ; but they will not be Americans.

The only way I know in which to make Americans of them, members of a free commonwealth, is to treat them like human beings.

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Treat them as you would the child born late into your own family—as one of you ; have confidence in them, even in these days, when their loyalty may be wavering, and when in their confusion they do not know where to turn.

This is a time of heart-searching for us who have accepted America's sanctuary, and also for those born in this land of the free. To the native American there comes a call to curb his individualism without sacrificing his individuality ; to quicken his patriotic impulses without dulling his feeling for humanity. It is an insistent call to prepare for war, and a still more insistent call to prepare for peace ; a deep, down-reaching peace, a high, uplifting peace.

For us, so-called " Hyphenated Americans," this period is one to severely test our loyalty to this country which has become ours by the grace of its people. They are a generous people, who mean to be just, a people whom we know to be far better than they appear to us now, and to whom we are bound for all time.

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In our heart of hearts we love this country more than Germany, or Austria or England or France ; we love it above the holy names of Jerusalem or Rome—The Sanctuary of Humanity—America.

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